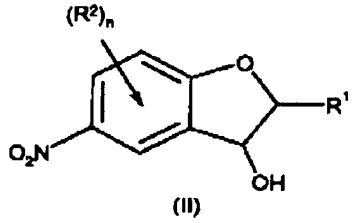
IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1, 4-12 and 21-26.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) At least one compound~~Compounds~~ of the formula (II),



(II)

wherein

R^1 is hydrogen or C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, and

R^2 are in each case independently of one another fluorine, chlorine, bromine, iodine, C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, C_1-C_{12}-alkoxy, hydroxyl, NR^3R^4 or $CONR^3R^4$, where R^3 and R^4 are each, independently of one another, hydrogen or C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, or NR^3R^4 as a whole is a cyclic amino radical having 4 to 12 carbon atoms, COO-(C_1-C_{12}-alkyl), -COO(C_4-C_{24}-aryl), -COO(C_5-C_{25}-arylalkyl), CO(C_1-C_{12}-alkyl), CO(C_4-C_{24}-aryl) or C_1-C_{12}-fluoroalkyl and

n is zero, one, two or three, or

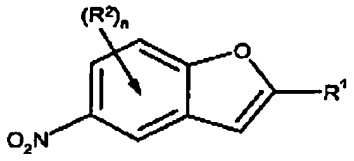
in the case where n is two or three it is possible for two adjacent R^2 substituents to be part of a fused ring system which in turn may optionally be substituted by the radicals mentioned above for R^2.

~~in which R^1, R^2 and n have the meanings specified under formula (I) in Claim 1.~~

3. (Original) 2-(n-Butyl)-5-nitro-2,3-dihydrobenzofuran-3-ol.

4-12 (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing at least one compound of formula (I),



(I)

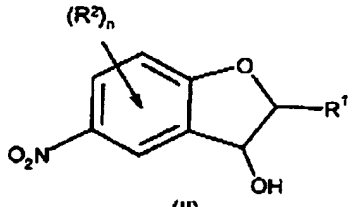
in which

R^1 is hydrogen or C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, and R^2 are in each case independently: fluorine, chlorine, bromine, iodine, C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, C_1-C_{12}-alkoxy, hydroxyl, NR^3R^4 or $CONR^3R^4$, where R^3 and R^4 are each, independently of one another, hydrogen or C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, or NR^3R^4 as a whole is a cyclic amino radical having 4 to 12 carbon atoms, COO-(C_1-C_{12}-alkyl), -COO(C_6-C_{24}-aryl), -COO(C_5-C_{25}-arylalkyl), CO(C_1-C_{12}-alkyl), CO(C_6-C_{24}-aryl) or C_1-C_{12}-fluoroalkyl and

n is zero, one, two or three, or
in the case where n is two or three it is possible for two adjacent R^2 substituents to be part of a fused ring system which in turn may optionally be substituted by the radicals mentioned above for R^2,

comprising converting by dehydration

of at least one compound of formula (II)



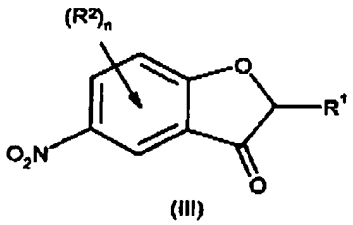
(II)

in which R^1, R^2 and n have the meaning under formula (I).

into at least one compound of formula (I):

wherein

~~Process according to Claim 10, characterized in that~~ the at least one compounds of the formula (II) is or are obtained by reducing at least one compounds of the formula (III)

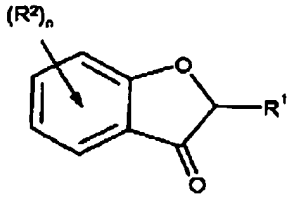


(III)

wherein~~in which~~ R^1, R^2 and n have the meaning specified under formula (I) as indicated above ~~in Claim 10~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the at least one compounds of the formula (III) is or are reduced by aluminium-hydrogen or boron-hydrogen compounds.

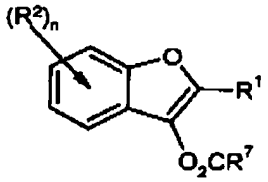
15. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the at least one compounds of the formula (III) are obtained by nitrating compounds of the formula (IV)



(IV)

in which R^1, R^2 and n have the meanings specified under formula (I).

16. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the compounds of the formula (IV) are obtained by hydrolysing at least one compound ~~compounds~~ of the formula (V)



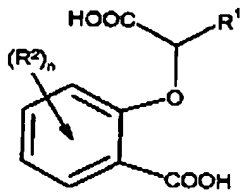
(V)

in which

R^1, R^2 and n have the meaning specified under formula (I) in Claim 10, and

R^7 is C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, C_5-C_{25}-arylalkyl, C_4-C_{24}-aryl or C_1-C_{12}-fluoroalkyl.

17. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 16, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the at least one compounds of the formula (V) is or are obtained by cyclizing decarboxylation of compounds of the formula (VI),



(VI)

in which R^1, R^2 and n have the meaning specified under formula (I) in Claim 10,

in the presence of at least one compound of the formula (RIII)

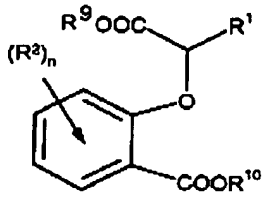
$$R^7COR^8 \qquad \text{(RIII)}$$

in which

R^7 has the meaning specified under formula (V), and

R^8 is $-O_2CR^7$, hydroxyl or OM, where M is an alkaline earth metal or alkali metal.

18. (Original) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 17, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ at least one compound ~~compounds~~ of the formula (VI) are obtained by hydrolysing at least one compound ~~compounds~~ of the formula (VII)



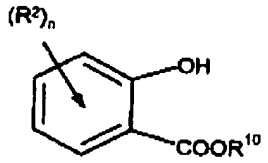
(VII)

in which

R^1, R^2 and n have the meaning specified under formula (I), and

R^9 and R^{10} are each independently of one another hydrogen, C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, C_5-C_{25}-arylalkyl or C_4-C_{24}-aryl.

19. (Original) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 18, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ at least one compound ~~compounds of the~~ formula (VII) are obtained by reacting at least one compound ~~compounds~~ of the formula (VIII)



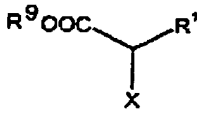
(VIII)

in which

R^2 and n have the meaning specified under formula (I) in Claim 10 and

R^{10} has the meaning specified under formula (VII),

with at least one compound ~~compounds of the~~ formula (IX)



(IX)

in which

R^1 has the meanings specified under formula (I) in Claim 10, and

R^9 has the meaning specified under formula (VII), and

X is chlorine, bromine, iodine or $R^{11}SO_3^-$ where

R^{11} is C_1-C_{12}-alkyl, C_4-C_{24}-aryl, C_5-C_{25}-arylalkyl or C_1-C_{12}-fluoroalkyl.

20. (Original) The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 17, wherein ~~characterized in that the~~ at least one compound of ~~compounds of the~~ formula (VI) are prepared by reacting at least one compound of ~~compounds of the~~ formula (VIII) with at least one compound of ~~compounds of the~~ formula (IX) in a one-pot reaction with hydrolysis of the ester functions taking place simultaneously.

21-26. (Cancelled)